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## 'Bioslurping' to begin at Earle

By ANGELA GALLOWAY  
FREEHOLD BUREAU

**COLTS NECK TOWNSHIP** — The Navy has unveiled a plan to use a giant vacuum-like system to suck diesel contamination from soil at Earle Naval Weapons Station. The yearlong program to clean one of 31 sites the Navy has identified as environmental problems will cost \$600,000, said Dennis Blazak, supervising engineer for Earle.

Officials told Earle's Restoration Advisory Board Thursday night that they hope to have the cleanup under way next month. The 23-member group of environmental officials, Navy representatives and citizens offers input on the Navy's remediation plans.

In a process dubbed "bioslurping,"

13 wells will suck groundwater from 12-feet below the surface. Pumps will drive diesel-contaminated water in a series of treatment facilities housed in two 40-by-8-foot trailers.

After the water is separated from the diesel and filtered, it will be sent on to the station's sewage treatment plant. The recovered diesel will be recycled for use as heating fuel, Blazak said.

It is unclear exactly how much diesel contaminates the soil, Blazak said. "We're not really sure when (the leak) started," Blazak said, estimating it is thousands of gallons. The system could process almost as much of 16,000 gallons of groundwater a day, Gregory J. Goepfert, an environmental engineer with Earle, told the

board.

Navy officials also announced Thursday night that the DEP finalized a \$4.5 million contract with Foster Wheeler late last month to cap landfills on two Earle sites totaling about 20 acres. The cap will consist of a layer of impermeable clay, topped with a layer of rock and three feet of soil, Blazak said. Officials hope to start clearing land for the cap this winter and begin building the actual cap in the spring, he said.

Earle has 31 sites on its 12,000 acres that are categorized by the federal government as priority sites, akin to Superfund cleanup sites in the private sector. As priority sites, they require immediate action to evaluate and resolve the hazards there.

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